

THE PILOT KNOB AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



QRZ

QRZ VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8 AUGUST, 2005

QST-FROM THE SHACK

By Mike Stewart, ABOVM

The Dog Days of August are upon us. The windless, dry days got me to thinking about the miserable conditions of HF lately. How does one get to the DX Honor Roll when a local 40 meter contact is a struggle? Hi, hi. I, for one, can't wait until the world above 20 meters opens up again. Here's hoping for an early return of the next sunspot peak.

One way to break up the summer doldrums would be a trip to the Kansas ARRL Convention. A trip out to Salina takes but a few hours, and there's much to share with your fellow Kansas Hams. This is the one time a year amateurs gather from across the state. A stop at the Eisenhower Museum's new exhibits in Abilene could be an added bonus.

This issue highlights other upcoming Club events to look forward to. Be sure to mark the key dates in August and September.

In closing, let me reiterate my thanks to the Field Day crew. They did a great job representing KS0LV on the air. The review of the results at the July meeting highlighted one point-it's fun to get out and operate! Don't miss an opportunity to get on the air and make new Ham friends-or to keep in touch with old ones.

Look forward to hearing you on the air soon.

73,

Mike

ABOVM

Special points of interest:

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AUGUST IS

ARRL CONVENTION TIME IN SALINA

PKARC TEST DATES

Club members and others interested in taking the FCC examinations for the various license classes should know that testing sessions for the Club have been set at the American Red Cross building on Shawnee Street, Leavenworth on the following dates throughout the year: 26 August, 28 October, and 16 December. Please notify Martha Auchard at 772-7350 of your desire to take the test, so Volunteer Examiners can be notified and all the elements you need are on hand.

If you need assistance preparing, please ask any of the Club officers. Classes will be held also throughout the year depending on the number of those interested in devoting the time.

AUGUST MEETING

DX OPERATIONS— 4 AUGUST 2005

We are pleased and fortunate to have Rebecca Rich, KB0VVT, as our August guest speaker. Rebecca from the KD DX Club, will discuss amateur radio contesting.

Rebecca was first licensed at age seven and achieved Amateur Extra status the next year. She was recently named as the Hiram Percy Maxim Award winner by the ARRL. She's competed in contesting for many years and participated in the IARU HF World Championship contest (CW mode) this summer.

Put this unique opportunity on your calendar and let's have a good showing. You'll learn something about high-end contesting and will get a glimpse of one of Ham radio's finest young ambassadors.

Larry Staples and Dave Weerts, KC0OON, asked that the following notice be sent out to area Hams. Starting on 25 July, 2005 and continuing until 2 August 2005, the National Boy Scout Jamboree will be held at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. The following information is how Hams can contact K2BSA during the Jamboree. Dave would love to hear about the number of contacts from the Midwest.

K2BSA SCOUT FREQUENCIES

80 METERS: PHONE: 3.940 MHZ, CW: 3.590 MHZ
 40 METERS: PHONE: 7.290 MHZ, CW: 7.030 MHZ
 20 METERS: PHONE: 14.290 MHZ, CW: 14.070 MHZ
 15 METERS: PHONE: 21.360 MHZ, CW: 21.140 MHZ
 10 METERS: PHONE: 28.360 MHZ, CW: 28.190 MHZ

QSL INFORMATION:

(SASE, PLEASE)

K2BSA c/o RAY MOYER S219
 BOY SCOUT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
 1325 WALNUT HILL LANE
 Irving, Texas 75062-2079

Be a part of the
 National
 Boy Scout
 Jamboree.
 25 July-
 2 August
 2005

Remember your scouting days?

HAM RADIO IN THE SUNFLOWER STATE

Ham radio ties Kansas together.

Most of our Ham radio activity centers on PKARC meetings and events. A little investigation finds statewide organizations, new nets, and history related to Ham radio.

If Gary's description of Dayton got you to be thinking about a Ham road trip, mark your calendar for Sunday, August 21. That's the date for the Kansas ARRL Section Convention in Salina. Salina's three short hours west of Leavenworth, and a stop at the Brookville Hotel in Abilene for a family-style chicken dinner is worth the trip alone. Make time for a summertime drive and some time with your Kansas amateur radio friends.

If you want to keep up with Kansas amateur radio, drop a quick line to Orlan Cook, W0OYH, at w0oyh@arrl.net, and ask him to add you to the KAR list. Orlan edits a monthly email newsletter that highlights everything and anything about Kansas Ham radio. If you don't have email access and would like to read this monthly report, let Mike, AB0VM, know. He'll be glad to get you a printed copy.

Kansas nets fill the airwaves throughout the week. Statewide HF nets handle NTS traffic, pass daily weather information, and allow operators to keep up with CW skills. Many nightly VHF/UHF nets are within easy reach of Leavenworth County and let you hear about other regional activities.

APRS represents one of many digital modes that has captured interest in recent years. When it comes to APRS operation, KOHAM digital repeaters serve as our eastern Kansas gateway to the wider APRS world. Did you know two key components of an APRS station, the GPS unit and a TNC, can be purchased from Kansas manufacturers? APRS has experienced great growth in recent years and promises to add new capabilities in the future.

A significant piece of amateur radio history is located just down the road in Olathe. Many have heard of Marshall Ensor Park and Museum at 18995 W. 183rd Street, but few understand the significance of Marshall's contributions to Ham radio. Operating as W9BSP, Marshall sent practice CW in the age before cassette tapes and CDs came on the scene. His life and service to amateur radio is the focus of the museum's displays. The buildings are listed as a Kansas State Historic Site and are also on the National Register of Historic Places. Plan a weekend visit in September or October, when the museum is open for tours. With its ample trees, W9BSP looks like a good QTH for a day-long operating event in the fall.

The wide range of present and past Ham-related activities provide opportunities for learning more about Ham radio. Look around and let your fellow PKARC Hams know if you find other Kansas amateur activities.

CODE OR NO CODE, AN EDITORIAL BY DAVE, KEODL

As Shakespeare once said: "That is the question!"

You know I have heard this will be the end of Amateur Radio as we know it. Well, I have heard this before, and Amateur Radio as I know it is still alive and well.

When I got my Novice ticket, Charles Logan, WD0DOT, gave me the test at his house, and he sent the paperwork off and for three months I waited for my Novice license to come in the mail. When I was ready to take the Technician test, I had to go to the FCC office in Kansas City, Missouri. That was fun!

The first big change to come along once I got licensed was the Volunteer Examiner (VE) program, and here came all the same people saying: "This will be the end of Amateur Radio," well Amateur Radio is still here and what do you know? The VE program, as far as I am concerned, turned out to be a good thing. Then along came the license restructuring and again everyone said: "This will be the end of Amateur Radio." Well Amateur Radio is still here and you know I have not seen a change in the way people look at Amateur Radio or a change in the people who are in Ham radio. The next change that got the most people talking was dropping the Morse code requirement to just 5 WPM for all classes. Well, what has that hurt? The good high speed CW operators still have their QSOs, they still have contests, and as far as I can tell nothing much has changed. I think the one thing that has changed is that some of the people who were afraid to get into the hobby because of the 13 WPM code requirement said this "five WPM is not so hard" and joined the ranks of the Ham radio operators. Some even found out they like operating CW and have increased their code speed without all the kicking and screaming that is sometimes associated with upgrading.

Amateur Radio is much more than operating CW, it's much more than operating Phone, you have new modes coming on line almost every week; there are modes a lot of us have not even tried that have been around for years. Just trying them is a change, and change is neither good nor bad, it's what we make out of the change that is either good or bad.

A lot of us got our start in the radio hobby in the Hey Day of CB (Oh God! Not That) Radio; I sure did; and a lot of good Ham radio operators came over from the CB band. Amateur Radio has always had LID's (Bad operators) and will always have people who abuse the privilege they have and operate in a manner that is not in the best interest of the hobby. Nothing is going to change that.

Doing away with the Morse Code requirement will not be the end of Amateur Radio. It's only another change. Amateur Radio is what we make of it, nothing more. It's just a means to an end; it's the means that I use to talk to people around the world; it's how I travel the world over and never leave my house. And at the end of the day, that's a pretty cheap trip.

The FCC has not done away with the code requirement yet, but they will. So what we as Hams need to do is not fret over the change, but insure that the new people coming into Amateur Radio are given the best introduction we can give them and encourage those who want to enjoy the fun and thrill of that first CW QSO the chance to learn Morse Code.

How do we do this? Well I think the best way (and the Club has been doing this) is to keep offering introduction classes to anyone who has an interest in Ham radio. Seeing that we turn out the best operators that we can, and giving those who want to learn the Code all the encouragement and assistance we can.

I got into Ham radio, so I could talk with people around the world. My idea of Amateur Radio is not dead, nor is it coming to an end. It's just changing and I have the opportunity to change with it or not. IT'S ONLY AS GOOD AS WE MAKE IT. So let us make it the best we can. 73s, Dave, K0EDL

HARMONICS

By Emily Stewart, KC0PTL

At the end of June, I left for Space Camp at the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, Kansas. Lots of people in the Club know about this great museum. This was my third year, and our group traveled to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

This summer I learned new facts about space exploration and Ham radio. Amateur Radio is used in space travel and the International Space Station (ISS). Several astronauts have their Tech licenses and use them while in orbit. In the ISS, they have a big communications hook-up with video and audio. I saw a live video of the astronauts on the ISS.

The guide showed the set that they use to talk to people just like us on Earth when the astronauts have the chance. It was a pretty big station and took up a lot of space. Very impressive! One of their radios is a Ham rig. The ISS astronauts can talk to people on Earth, but only at certain times when solar radiation and flares are at a minimum. They talk to Ham radio operators just like us!

We also learned more about the space shuttle. I learned that a space shuttle is the whole system including the external tank and solid rocket boosters attached to the orbiter. Past orbiter mission have carried amateur rigs, but they were small.

I had a blast at camp, and I was happy to tell you about it! I'm planning on going to the fourth year, when the group will fly to Florida and tours the Kennedy Space Center. If I get in, I'm sure to learn loads more!

SEND YOUR CALL SIGN TO PLUTO!

You can send your name/call sign all the way to Pluto free of charge according to the QRZ web site. The New Horizons mission is due to launch January 11, 2006 to perform reconnaissance of Pluto-Charon and the Kuiper Belt. All the names entered on the web site below will be recorded on a CD which will be mounted on the spacecraft before it begins it's historic journey to Pluto and beyond:

Dial-Up: http://Pluto.jhuapl.edu/ecard/sendName_ecard_content_low.html

Broadband: http://Pluto.jhuapl.edu/ecard/sendName_ecard_content.html

To get your call sign included, just enter it after your last name, e.g. Ed Menard/KD7QOR. When you've entered, your name, there is a very nice certificate available for you to print out at <http://Pluto.jhuapl.edu>.

FROM THE KICKAPOO QRP OPERATING DESK

GARY, WB0MNA

VACATION TIME AND OPERATING HF PORTABLE

How many times have you been on vacation and found yourself in a location that would be great for HF band operation? One problem...you didn't bring an HF rig and antennas to be able to do so. Most of us tend to bring a VHF/UHF handheld or mobile rig when traveling, but due to various reasons tend to not bring any equipment for HF operation.,

This is a situation you need not find yourself in, if you plan your vacation activities well and have some portable HF equipment. With today's modern HF transceivers there's little reason for not having space to carry some HF equipment on vacation.

Modern HF rigs, like the ICOM-703 AND Yaesu FT-817, require very little space and power yet afford the opportunity to make many interesting contacts from remote locations. The same goes for antennas. Many contacts can be made using the Hustler mobile HF antennas system or many other variations like the Miracle Whip or MP-1 antenna.

My portable HF station consists of the Yaesu FT-817 HF/VHF/UHF all mode transceiver, a MP-1 antenna, several very portable homebrew interface devices to interconnect the radio to my laptop computer for digital operations, and a few sets of spare "AA" rechargeable batteries. With this set-up, I can operate PSK-31, APRS, CW, SSB and many other modes available to me. All of this equipment will fit into a medium-sized aluminum briefcase making it very portable and well protected against accidental damage.

So what has this set-up allowed me to do in the way of operation? How about operating from a hotel room you're stuck in every evening and you have no interest in watching TV. Or better yet, how about operating from a log cabin in Grand Teton National Park where you have no TV or telephone to distract you. That's where I operated from on Field Day in 2003. Lot's of fun and a real thrill making contacts from such a great location. Those Teton Mountains sure are pretty next to Jackson Lake in Wyoming.

You may be thinking at this point that it's difficult to make HF contacts with only 5 watts of RF. Sometimes it can be and other times it may totally surprise you when a good DX station comes back to your call of CQ. It's not always about power when making contacts, it's more about technique and mode plus lots of practice and patience.

If you have an interest in working HF portable, ask several Club members like Mike (AB0VM) or Rick (KA3LOC) or me and we can help you get started in this fun and exciting facet of Ham radio. There's always something new to learn in this hobby, so join us in the fun.

See you at the August meeting.

Gary A.

WB0MNA

MARS SPECTACULAR!

The following article was provided by Dave Phillips, K0EDL:

The Red Planet is about to be spectacular! This month and next, Earth is catching up with Mars in an encounter that will culminate in the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history. The next time Mars may come this close is 2287. Due to the way Jupiter's gravity tugs on Mars and perturbs its orbit, astronomers can only be certain that Mars has not come this close to Earth in the last five thousand years, but it may be as long as 60,000 years before it happens again.

The encounter will culminate on August 27th when Mars comes to within 34,649,589 miles of Earth and will be (next to the Moon) the brightest object in the night sky. It will attain a magnitude of -2.9 and will appear 25.11 arc seconds wide. At a modest 75-power magnification, Mars will look as large as the full moon to the naked eye. Mars will be easy to spot. At the beginning of August, it will rise in the east at 10 p.m. and reach its azimuth at about 3 a.m.

By the end of August when the two planets are closest, Mars will rise at nightfall and reach its highest point in the sky at 12:30 a.m. That's pretty convenient to see something that no human being has seen in recorded history. So, mark your calendar at the beginning of August to see Mars grow progressively brighter and brighter throughout the month.

Share this with your children and grandchildren. **NO ONE ALIVE TODAY WILL EVER SEE THIS AGAIN!**

Note: It will be interesting to see, what if any impact, this will have on geomagnetic and solar activity affecting propagation during this period.

GET THE WORD OUT!

Technician Class begins September 6th.

PKARC will again host a Technician licensing course beginning September 6th. The class will last eight weeks and will meet Tuesday evenings from 6-8 p.m. The location will be announced shortly.

The course will include a review of all knowledge needed to complete a 35 question multiple choice examination. Successful candidates will receive an FCC license that authorizes them all amateur radio privileges for the Technician Class.

Registration is only \$20 and includes all course materials, the American Radio Relay League's NOW YOU'RE TALKING text, and the test fee. The test will be given on Friday evening, October 25th by the MO-KAN Volunteer Examiner team.

Let interested folks know about this opportunity. Contact Mike, AB0VM, for further information.

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P.O. Box 632
Leavenworth, KS 66048
Http://www.pkarc.com

MEETINGS

Date: First Thursday of each month (except for December)
Time: 7:30 p.m., Central Time
Location: The American Red Cross
525 Shawnee

CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT MIKE
STEWART, AB0VM

VICE PRESIDENT GARY
AUCHARD, WB0MNA

SECRETARY/TREASURER/
QRZ

ED MENARD, KD7QOR

AFFILIATIONS

THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY
LEAGUE
THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
THE LEAVENWORTH COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the club is to further the exchange of information and cooperation among members, to promote radio knowledge, fraternalism and individual efficiency, to provide assistance to the best advantage in the event of emergency, and to conduct club programs and activities to advance the general interest and welfare of amateur radio. Anyone interested in the activities of this organization will be eligible for membership. Members must comply with FCC rules and regulations, as well as rules established by the club. Dues are \$20 per year (no extra cost for spouse or minor children who are amateurs).

Editor's Note: QRZ is published monthly and may be quoted in other publications provided a credit line is included and the author (if known) is given acknowledgment. Items related to amateur radio will be advertised free of charge. Articles for publication in QRZ are always welcome and willingly accepted in any form. We reserve the right to edit material as necessary. Please let me know if you experience problems getting your issues of QRZ, or if it is received in a difficult to read state. Members are encouraged to receive their QRZ via E-mail, rather than paper copy. Requests to receive the hard copy version will be honored. Your effort to reduce club expenses will be appreciated.

Comments or suggestions regarding the QRZ format are welcome and appreciated.

Ed Menard, KD7QOR, QRZ Editor

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